

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION C 35713x

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December 13, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL HAIG

FROM: RICHARD T. KENNEDY  
JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE *John*

SUBJECT: Latest Message from Fred Ladd in Phnom Penh

At Tab B is a message to you from Fred Ladd dated December 7 reporting the imminent resignation of Lon Nol (which did not materialize), a CINCPAC plan to send all MAP shipments to the FANK via Kompong Som, and other observations about the unstable political situation in Cambodia following the collapse of the Chenla II operation.

This message does not really contribute much to our knowledge of the political scene--we have been getting full reports from CAS and also from Embassy cables--but it does inform us that CINCPAC actually is moving on his long-known plan to use Kompong Som as the major supply route. We have not been informed officially of this and have resisted diversions of scarce MAP resources to this project up to now. We would recommend against getting too deeply into this Kompong situation with Ladd, though, until we can find out more about what CINCPAC may have in mind; for example, the use of Kompong Som on a contingency basis for MAP shipments might have some merit, but we certainly would agree with Ladd that a plan to set it up as the primary route in the near future would be a disaster on several counts--route security, cost, GKR resources available to name a few.

At Tab A is a message from you to Ladd which thanks him for his report and tells him we will keep a close watch on things from here. We doubt that a more substantive report is needed at this time.

Recommendation:

That you sign the cable to Ladd at Tab A.

NSS Review  
Completed.

JCS completed review for PACOM.

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A

LS - HK 83107

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TO: Amembassy PHNOM PENH

VIA CAS CHANNELS

EYES ONLY FOR STATION CHIEF

1. Please pass following message to Political Military Counselor Ladd from Brig. General Alexander M. Haig.
2. Your reporting of the complex political situation in Phnom Penh is much appreciated. I gather that the crisis atmosphere was subsided somewhat since your message of December 7, but we are still watching the situation with concern. Please let us know if there are any aspects which you regard as being particularly significant or worth attention back in Washington. It seems clear that Lon Nol himself is living in a dream world and needs continuous firm guidance to move on the hard issues which must be dealt with if the ball game is not to be lost. Even with more delegation of authority, that sort of guidance probably will be essential if we are going to be successful in preventing the NVA from scoring big during this dry season.
3. The information you provided about the possible use of Kompong Som for receiving all of the MAP supplies for Cambodia was the first we had heard that this plan might be implemented. We are concerned about diverting scarce resources to this project now for the very reasons you cite. I appreciate the political and military sensitivities

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2

that this might cause us, and you may be sure that we will keep a close eye on further developments.

4. Keep up the good work and warm regards.

**B**

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

TS- HK831C

7 December 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brigadier General Alexander M. Haig  
Deputy Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs

The following messages were received for you this morning from Mr. Ladd:

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"To: Brig. Gen. Haig, The White House

"From: Mr. Ladd, Phnom Penh 1631

"The following message was written earlier today. We just received word through political section that Lon Nol will resign this morning. It is 1000 hours local time now. Sak Sutsakhan's aide called me twenty minutes ago to say that Sak Sutsakhan had just left a meeting with Lon Nol and was enroute to see Chang Heng (Chief of State). Sak Sutsakhan will call me as soon as he can and wants to see me. I have reported this to the Ambassador and am standing by for Sak Sutsakhan's call. Will keep you informed.

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"Top Secret Sensitive Exclusively Eyes Only

"To: Brig. Gen. Haig, The White House

"From: Mr. Ladd, Phnom Penh 1632

"1. A couple of matters are becoming somewhat unglued concerning this place and you should be aware of them.

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"2. During the past three weeks CINCPAC has been putting the heat on a project to develop the Port of Kompong Som to receive all repeat all of the MAP supplies for Cambodia. We, much earlier, agreed to a test shipment to Kompong Som with possible partial MAP deliveries to that port in mind. A TDY survey team from CINCPAC was here about six weeks ago and in mid-November recommended 2 April 72 as the target date for all MAP shipments to be routed to Kompong Som. We sent a message to CINCPAC, Phnom Penh 6113, pointing out the proposed target date was totally unrealistic. Yesterday MEDTC received a message from CINCPAC stating JCS has tasked that Hq 'to develop a time-phased logistical plan to shift the Cambodian logistical support from the RVN.' That message is cited as JCS 6475/131351 Oct 71 (PASEP) (BOM) and all three other messages cited are NOTALs. The guidance provides for total GKR responsibility for off-loading, storage and transshipment onward. It also calls for Ted Mataxis' people to come up with estimates as to size of an additional MEDTC force to be based in Kompong Som to include a separate commo system for the operation.

"3. I have nothing against contingency plans, but if this particular one is closely related to any date like 1 April 72 for implementation then the cart is getting way ahead of the horse. Also, if any word leaked out that the JCS/CINCPAC is planning any sort of permanent support base with additional U. S. military personnel at Kompong Som, it would be damned embarrassing for all concerned. Besides, it has taken us a year and a half to get the FANK reasonably geared to the present system which they can barely protect now. FANK simply hasn't the resources or the professional skill to shift the total focus of their logistical supply at this time or for the foreseeable future. They can't afford the redeployment of the forces that would be necessary to secure the Kompong Som area. They cannot guarantee the use of Route 4. How far this has gone or how serious JCS/CINCPAC is about it, I don't know. I predict, however, that if the entire concept is not handled very slowly and with the closest security and control; the shit will really hit the fan. CHMEDTC is, in the plan, ordered to coordinate with FANK and a leak will surely come from that source if not from Washington. Be very careful with this one, it

EYES ONLY

could backfire in many ways and I would hate to see another albatross hung around our collective necks, particularly when the damn bird couldn't fly even before it was dead.

"4. I referred to the second problem in my most recent message to you. It is the rumblings we are getting of high-level discontent with FANK's showing at Chenla II and with Lon Nol's personal handling of the operation. In Tam got hold of the Ambassador over the weekend and informed him even Sirik Matak was disenchanted and thinking a change is necessary. The reverse at Chenla II was indeed partially a result of Lon Nol's actions, but there were other factors also like poorly qualified field commanders, many non-MAP trained and equipped troops were involved, there were too many dependents present, the FANK logistics system is rather primitive at the lower levels, etc.

"5. The Ambassador sent a message to State yesterday about his feelings in this matter of internal leadership at the highest level. A young FSO-4 in the political section, whom I do not consider either completely objective, is doing the leg work as far as the Embassy is concerned; with Swank and Enders calling the plays. Although the rest of us have been ordered to stay out of it and if we are approached to refer all comers to Swank and Enders, I have no doubt that if a crisis comes, I will hear from Lon Nol, Sirik Matak or Sak Sutsabkan. If I am so approached, my intention is to listen to what they have to say and then (if appropriate) advise the Ambassador. Unless you direct me to the contrary, I have no intention of turning them off. I have been and am considered a personal friend by all three and I think it would be counterproductive for me to start my 'I can't talk to you' dialogue with them at this stage of the game.

"6. There are many uniquely oriental, political, personal and professional factors mixed up in this thing. Some are good, some are bad, some could be dangerous. All of the principals involved and some outsiders have heavy stakes in the outcome. Some of those involved are Lon Nol, Lon Non, In Tam, Sirik Matak, Son Ngoc Thanh, Cheng Heng (Chief of State), the Khmer Krom, Bonzes, etc.

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7. The Ambassador's guidance to the political section is to counsel 'unity and settling of differences' within the framework of the club. I concur in this as sound. Right now the worms in the can are wiggling more than usual and it's difficult to find the pattern. I will keep you advised.

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Thomas H. Karamessines  
Deputy Director for Plans

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